



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE MARY M. MUSHINSKY
EIGHTY-FIFTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 4038
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591
HOME: (203) 269-8378
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8585
TOLL FREE: 1-800-842-8267
FAX: (860) 240-0067
E-MAIL: Mary.Mushinsky@cga.ct.gov

RANKING MEMBER
PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS
COMMITTEE

MEMBER
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN

Testimony of Rep. Mary Mushinsky Regarding RB 666, An Act Concerning the
Reduction of Child Poverty and 660, An Act Concerning Establishment of a Food Stamp
Employment and Training Program and Fund
Before the Human Services Committee
Public Hearing Tuesday, March 11, 2008 10:30 a.m.

Thank you for raising these bills, which in combination with RB 344, An Act Concerning Family Prosperity and the Recommendations of the Child Poverty and Prevention Council, sent by Select Committee on Children to the Appropriations Committee, encompass the heart of the child poverty and prevention legislation this year. These bills follow the recommendations of the Child Poverty and Prevention Council in that they invest taxpayer dollars to reach our statutory goal of reducing child poverty 50% by 2014 by these techniques:

1. targeting specific populations,
2. maximizing untapped federal dollars,
3. using research-based strategies that work, and
4. measuring the progress using results-based accountability (RBA).

Comments on RB 666

Sec. 1 is similar to RB 344 in that it targets young parents, but this bill provides competitive grants to improve the employment of fathers. The Children's Committee bill provides employment training to both sexes. Both bills use RBA to ensure good value and use collaboration at the municipal level.

Sec. 2 directs the Department of Education to provide grants for improving the career outcomes of males and includes personal responsibility, including sexual responsibility. I recommend you target both sexes and follow the Carrera model, which emphasizes mentoring and career planning.

Sec. 3 and 4 enhance the use of untapped federal food stamp funds. Even if homes don't have access to a computer, it should be possible to use computers at Family Resource Centers, libraries or other public buildings to make eligibility easier to claim.

Sec. 5 provides competitive grants to reduce teen pregnancy. In the 1980's, Rep. Keeley and myself set up 7 experimental programs. Some were more effective than others. The Carrera model, although more expensive per youth, was the most successful at preventing adolescent pregnancy and directing the youth to career and academic training before starting a family. The outstanding model is the New Britain program, Pathways/Senderos. Career mentoring programs are also effective. Grants should go to replicate the most successful research-based strategies. Please replace the word "teen" with "adolescent" in lines 69, 74 and 93 to include those youth at risk of pregnancy who are younger than 13.

Sec. 6 is a brilliant suggestion from Department of Social Services (DSS) to begin training young parents immediately—while their child is newborn. Let's not waste a minute to train young parents to earn a better wage for their child.

Sec. 7 addresses funding for the pilot in Sec. 6, as well as funding for other target populations. Here it would be appropriate to add language from RB 344 (attached) to maximize use of federal funds, specifically the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program. Other states are already claiming this money—we should also.

Comments on RB 660

This bill establishes the fund to accept the federal Food Stamp Employment and Training Program. No matter how the fund is structured, the state should track the progress of use of this new source of federal funds.